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ABSTRACT

Leadership of colleges and universities poses problems for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the President. Ambiguous constituencies and the pull of various support groups inside and outside the institution present continual dilemmas for each academic CEO. Two instances of academic leadership are presented that compare and analyze the styles of two presidents against a backdrop of the relevant literature. These two case studies of leadership are used to examine in depth the variables that influence the emergence of leadership styles. A framework for distinguishing leadership from management is developed from a synthesis of literature from various academic disciplines. The situational imperatives of the organization, coupled with the CEO's ability to develop supportive relationships and the form that these relationships take, is found to have a decided impact on the success of the emergent leadership style. Contains 14 references. (KM)

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A Tale of Two Presidents:
A Look at Academic Presidential Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Leadership of colleges and universities poses problems for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)--the President. Ambiguous constituencies and the pull and tug of various support groups inside and outside the institution present continual dilemmas for each academic CEO. This paper presents cases of academic leadership that compare and analyze the styles of two presidents against a backdrop of the relevant literature.

The purpose of this paper is to use the analysis of the two case studies in leadership to take an in-depth look at the variables that influence the emergence of leadership styles. A framework for distinguishing leadership from management is developed from a synthesis of literature from various academic disciplines. The situational imperatives of the organization, coupled with the CEO's ability to develop supportive relationships and the form that these relationships take, is found to have a decided impact on the success of the emergent leadership style.

The challenge facing university chief executive officers (CEO's) is the balancing of organizational expectations against the environmental needs of the institution at all times during their tenure. But does this mean leadership or "managerialship?" Is a style of leadership inherent in the expectations of an organization for its CEO? Do these expectations constrain the CEO's leadership style, or do they extend the leadership potential of the incumbent? Does leadership have a special meaning for an academic institution, or are there universal precepts about leadership and leadership styles regardless of the type of organization within which they reside?

The purpose of this paper is to investigate leadership in academic institutions. This discussion will present two examples of university presidential leadership--Dr. Robert Brown of the University of the United States (UUS) and Dr. Gregory Jutty of the State University of America (SUA). The similarities of the situations facing them when they were installed as a CEO provide an opportunity to study different types of leadership behavior. These are actual case studies; however, the names of the institutions and their presidents have been altered for the purpose of anonymity.

Even though the two institutions are not particularly analogous (UUS is a well-established graduate degree-granting privately funded university while SUA is an emerging public institution with newly acquired graduate degree programs) both men assumed office at a time of struggle for their organizations. And in both cases, the university weathered the strains with relatively good success.

In Power and Leadership In Pluralist Systems, Andrew S. McFarland points out a potential dilemma in analyzing leadership, a dilemma that is embedded in the mode of analysis chosen. On one side sits the empiricist who seeks verification and replication of observations; on the other is the descriptive historian who creates a journal of what occurred and establishes the fact that outstanding individuals exist. Recreating an event of history to determine the "truth" about leadership is hardly possible; however, chronicling that same event without analytical evidence of the influence of a leader is equally unsatisfying for understanding leadership. Thus, the appropriate way to study leadership is not well determined so far (McFarland, 1969).

With this admonition in mind, this paper will present the leadership "stories" of the two presidents, will develop a framework for analyzing leadership styles, and will discuss the leadership issues and questions that are raised.

PROBLEMS OF LEADERSHIP IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

What type of leader should the president of an academic institution be? The image of the president has been discussed since the time when the administration of these organizations began to be delegated to professional managers instead of faculty members "filling in" as registrars, bursars and the like (Rudolph, 1962). Charles Franklin Thwing's 1926 edition of The College President states certain traits that this chief executive officer should possess: health, scholarship, judicialness, foresight, energy, optimism, patience, conciliatoriness, a sense of proportion, constructive conservatism, respect and love, and

organizing power--reminiscent of the qualities attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher-king (1926).

The pessimistic tone of Warren Bennis' The Unconscious Conspiracy (1976) homes in on both the nature of academic leadership and Bennis' sense of the dearth of leaders:

Time was when the leader could decide--period. A Henry Ford or a Carnegie could issue a ukase--and everyone would automatically obey. Their successors' hands are now tied in innumerable ways: by government requirements, by union rules, by the moral--and sometimes legal--pressures of organized consumers and environmentalists. . . .

The greatest problem facing today's institutions is the concatenation of external forces that impinge and impose upon it events outside the skin boundary of the organizations (1976, pp. 148-149).

Bennis, having served as president of a public multi-campus university, coupled with his academic background in organization theory, addresses himself to the near impossibility for success for the academic CEO. He views the "man at the top" as isolated, caught in the political polarization of issues, and embroiled in a climate of dissensus (1976, p. 157). Bennis concludes by projecting what academic leadership might look like in the future. Accepting the prospect of bigger and more complex organizations constrained by the involvement of elements both from the inside and the outside, he suggests that leadership will become more "collective" or team-oriented--a development which he believes would bring less clarity and more ambiguity to the question of "who's in charge" (Bennis, 1976).

The diverse constituencies and role expectations further obscure the image of the academic institutional leader. Commissioned by the American Council on Education, Joseph Kauffman observes the various constituencies

to which the academic president must direct attention (1980). These include: the board of trustees, the students, the parents of students, the faculty, other administrators, and, in the case of public institutions, the governing board and state government. Omitted from Kauffman's list but of equal concern are: the effects of federal regulations, of which presidents must also be aware; the concern for sources of income given as gifts to the institution (for privately funded institutions, a lack of concern for donations can result in an over-reliance on tuition as the sole source on institutional revenues); and the need for good relations with the local community within which the institution is located.

However, Kauffman concludes on a far more optimistic note than Bennis. He suggests that what is needed in higher education is politically effective leadership, visible leadership, and leadership that holds as essential the value of educational institutions. He does not use "political" as a pejorative, but as an adjective connoting the ability to know what is needed and how to build the support to fulfill those needs.

The problems of the academic president can be summed up simply by the word "ambiguous." The role expectations for the president are ambiguous; the constituencies and their relative importance are ambiguous; and the leadership form that is effective is ambiguous. Under these conditions, it is not very surprising that the average tenure for these CEO's is less than seven years and the fewer and fewer people aspire to the position (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 1984).

ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES

Public perception of the academic president exemplifies leadership. The prestige bestowed on university presidents illustrates this. However, the styles brought to this job by various individuals are not the same, nor has every individual been effective. While both President Brown and President Jutty have been relatively successful as academic leaders (each holding their position over 10 years), their leadership styles manifest different behaviors. But how are their leadership styles described? Why is one style better suited to the imperatives of a particular situation? Do the expectations of the organization prescribe an effective leadership style? Can a person selected for a leadership position of this sort predetermine the necessary characteristics for effectiveness?

This section will describe what kind of leaders Brown and Jutty are. The following analysis of their respective styles will rely on the perspective that situationally bound conditions seem to help focus an evolving leadership style (Bass, 1981).

While seemingly different, the environmental characteristics pertinent to the organization at the time of each man's ascension to the chief executive office hold a basic similarity. For both the University of the United States and the State University of America, the time when their presidents assumed office could certainly be described as a time of difficulty. For Robert Brown, the financial condition of UUS was not stable—an operating budget funded 80 percent from tuition income during a time of enrollment declines; few alumni donations; a meager \$5 million endowment; rising operational costs; and admission standards below the

level commensurate with an expensive private educational institution. For Gregory Jutty, although SUA was financially solvent, the small, little-known state institution was mandated by its Board of Trustees to overcome its previous incarnation as a branch campus of the land-grant university, to grow and to become a prominent research center. For the CEO, it was a time of high stress and pressure, not unlike that of the tension of recovering from potential financial collapse.

In its own way, each institution was enduring a crisis. Ann Ruth Willner (1984) applies Weberian analysis to describe conditions necessary for the emergence of charismatic leadership:

crisis ----> social distress ----> leader + doctrine ----> charisma

She suggests that the leader's doctrine defines social situations in simple terms, terms that absolve the general population from guilt or blame for the distressful situation. The leader's doctrine offers a vision of hope for the future, restoring a sense of purpose for the population. Willner's concept of charismatic leadership embodies moral quality, teleological purpose and pervasive power. It is not enough for followers to accept a leader's ideas; the followers of charismatic leaders see their statements as source of beliefs. There is a sense of unconditional commitment from the followers (Willner, 1984).

The selection of each of these men for the top leadership position of their institutions fits this formula. Both Brown's and Jutty's appointments depended on extensive interviews with their boards, during

which their philosophies (doctrines) about academic leadership surely were made known. The acceptance by their respective boards of their philosophies (doctrines) resulted in their appointments--or in their arising as leaders. Thus, the matching of the perceived crisis situation--the distress of their respective boards created by each institution's context--with their appearance as candidates for and their selection as the presidents (leader + doctrine) fits within this paradigm.

This should suggest that both Brown and Jutty, with respect to their institutions, are charismatic leaders. However, this may be pushing Willner's paradigm too far. Further analysis shows that neither actually fits within Willner's definition of charismatic leadership. Neither can be seen as source of beliefs with unconditional commitment from their followers in the same sense as say a Gandhi or a Martin Luther King. Then, what kind of a leader is Robert Brown or Gregory Jutty?

The leadership style termed "transactional" used by James MacGregor Burns (1978) may describe Robert Brown's leadership style. This leadership form is characterized by bargaining and trading to accomplish an objective:

Transactional leadership like this thrives in small groups. Formal or informal heads of groups act as brokers both within their groups and among groups. These transactions consist of actual support and actual promises, expectations, obligations, rewards (Burns, p. 289).

Vis a' vis UUS, Brown's "reason to be" is to wheel and deal for the sake of the institution and his objectives for it. Early in his presidency, Brown insisted on the continual raising of academic admission standards and relative national rankings of the institution so that he

had, in essence, something that he could exchange--the prestige of association with a highly regarded university. For example, he carefully helped select Board of Trustee members who are wealthy and powerful; he attended political receptions and dinners in search of "someone who might be of use" to the school; he often appeared in the media to bring UUS' name to the forefront; these all illustrate his ability and commitment to broker for the institution. Each and every one of his activities, as he described during an interview, presents his sense of exchanging and bargaining for the institution--in effect, he exchanges support for an opportunity to associate with the university (Brown, 1985).

To Brown's credit, this strategy reaped the desired benefits. Freshmen enrollments by September, 1987 were the highest since the mid-1970's and with an increased SAT average. Donations and grants increased to the point where the institution now holds \$2-\$5 million in reserve annually. And a new sports and convocation center opened in 1988, built on a \$10 million donation from one individual. In a televised interview, the individual donor intimated that it was the value of association with the institution that prompted his generous gift.

On the other hand, Gregory Jutty can be seen more according to Burns' concept of a "transformational" leader. To Burns, transformational leadership is an engaging relationship between leaders and followers during which the moral and motivational levels of both are raised. A major aspect of this leadership style is the moral uplifting of both followers and leaders. Drawing on the writings of Simmel and other sociologists, who saw the value of conflict in society, Burns suggests

that transformational leadership functions by helping to express, shape, and curb conflict. Thus, it is the conflict over intrinsic values from which transformational leadership arises, expressed in terms of pursuits that are morally based or, in simpler terms, that are goal-oriented. Leaders of this type are often goal-oriented, with their actions directed toward the attainment of those goals (Burns, 1978).

Jutty's "game plan"--the expression of what SUA could become--is the basis on which he engaged followers. Through his encouragement, his supporters become as committed to the belief of realizing the potential of the institution as he is. But his supporters, as Brown's, are not found within the organization. To Jutty, the support relationships that are important to attaining goals--his "followers"--are seen in the Board of Trustees, in the political powers in the state capital, and in the business leaders of the surrounding county. Similarly, Brown's "followers" are found in UUS' Board of Trustees (purported to be among the wealthiest of any university board) and in the national and international business and political communities.

Interestingly, neither Brown nor Jutty express the belief that strong support came from within their schools. In fact, their actions toward staff and faculty groups suggest that this relationship was characteristically different from the CEO's relationship with outside support groups. To the outside world, the impression of strength bordering on charisma appears important in developing a leader/led relationship with those various potential support groups. However, within the institution, the relationship criteria seem different. To the inside

world of the institution, Brown expressed his role as the facilitator of communications. To internal groups, the university president is the ultimate manager--the Chief Executive Officer (with emphasis on executive). John Corson reflects:

The effectiveness of the management of a college or university is determined by the imagination with which information is assembled and analyzed, and the skill, candor, and subtlety with which it is communicated throughout these highly decentralized organizations (1975 pp. 162-163).

Efficiency and effectiveness are inherently management concerns. Thus, relative to the internal workings of a college or university, leadership styles for management seem appropriate. Brown recalls learning the necessary management skills to keep communications open within his staff--the weekly staff meetings with vice-presidents and deans, etc. (Brown, 1985). On the other hand, admitting his lack of interest and skill, Jutty hired staff to provide the necessary "managerialship." However, he trusted that his experience as a Dean of a college at another university afforded him the knowledge of the inner functionings of academic institutions and, thus, the insight to know that management was needed and to provide for it through others (Jutty, 1985).

Managerial leadership, as characterized by the literature of the human relations movement, seem to provide an apt description of the relationships between these CEO's and their internal groups--faculties and staffs. Characterized by Chris Arygris, Douglas McGregor and many others, managerial leadership helps to fuse the concepts of leadership with the concepts of management. Human problems within organizations derive from

the incongruence between the nature of mature individuals and the formal organization. It is the role of the manager as leader to tap the motivations of others to achieve success (Arygris, 1967). Thus, managerial leadership is neither exchanging nor engaging; it is strictly task-oriented.

A certain amount of commitment to the goals of the institution is needed if the staff and faculty are to support and not undermine the long term plans of the President. Brown used internal informational organs, speeches, staff receptions, and awards as mechanisms to maintain contact with internal groups. However, there is a certain distance between the President and his written "edicts." The lack of the same energy with which he courts outside support or exerts influence on outside forces hints at the difference. To the inside, he is seen as the manager--the person that ultimately outlines what tasks will be necessary. Staff and faculty support is important only to accomplish his objectives, but the influence he exerts and the relationships he needs to do this are subtly different from the active support he requires from outside followers.

Brown's stated concerns for staff morale and faculty salaries seem to reflect almost basic human relations movement tenets of the "good" executive leader. Carrying through on these commitments displays a show of support for those inside the University, but only to the extent that they provide the basis for staff and faculty commitment not to undermine his objectives and to carry out task assignments. In essence, Brown has influenced their behaviors, but not exchanged or engaged with them, to connect with his objectives for the institution. His influence over the

staff and faculty is limited to their carrying out the tasks necessary for him to continue as the CEO.

Jutty, however, used conflict with his faculty in particular to raise important issues and to permit him to voice his goals--hinting at his transformational style qualities. In some ways, Jutty is a reform leader. In lofty terms, he is reforming SUA, making it become a major research center. Transactional leaders require an eye for opportunity and a sense of bargaining and persuading; reform leaders require participation with a large number of allies and must contend with divisions within their own ranks (Burns, 1978). Jutty's concern for aligning with the political "vectors of power" within state politics, his divisiveness within his faculty, and the different agendas of the support groups outside of the institution define that with which he must contend (Jutty, 1985).

Some differences in the contexts between UUS and SUA when Brown and Jutty took their respective positions may have had an impact on the style of leadership each assumed. The desperate financial crisis of UUS may not have offered Brown the opportunity to embark on a course to develop "engaging" relationships with potential followers. Quick, bold action was needed to achieve the single, important objective--solvency. His definition of institutional advancement clearly mirrors the bargaining and exchanging qualities of Burns' transactional leader.

In contrast, the environmental context and the needs of SUA provided a different opportunity for Jutty. The leadership expectations of the Board in hiring Jutty were based on their belief in and support of his ability, over time, to reform and transform SUA from a second-rate

institution to a major national force. Quick action was not required, nor would that provide the time necessary to establish long-term faculty and financial resources on which to build a research center. This alone may have set the stage for the incorporation of a leadership style. Unlike Brown, who claims not to have analyzed what style would best fit the situation, Jutty carefully and continually analyzes what leadership is needed of him (Jutty, 1985). To encourage SUA to emerge into "what it could become" may hold the leadership requirements of its President. To accomplish this goal, the President would have to recruit followers and engage supporters in the belief in SUA's manifest destiny as a major research center. Again, according to Burns, the transformational leadership style is most appropriate to the mission. Thus, the imperatives of the situation can be seen to have an influence on the adoption of both Brown's and Jutty's leadership styles.

LEADERSHIP ISSUES

The experiences of the two academic presidents described in this paper present examples of leadership that basically "fly in the face" of Warren Bennis' earlier pessimistic analysis of the effectiveness of university presidents. While implying a methodology for organizing internal support structures and staff relationships, the Bennis recommendation for the team approach seems to ignore the importance of outside support groups and to negate the impact of the context within which the institution is situated. Bennis seems convinced that the contextual requirements and infinity of relationships bombarding the university president make success nearly impossible. The successes of

Robert Brown and Gregory Jutty are not identified with the Bennis team approach. In fact, their adherence to a leadership style that set them apart from their staffs and faculties may be a key to their effectiveness. This key is the downplaying of managerialship and the highlighting of objective or goal-oriented leadership.

The imperatives of an organization's situation may imply a type of social Darwinism in selecting leaders. Consistent with Weber's and Willner's analysis of the effect of crisis in promoting the rise of leaders, Darwinism applied to leadership suggests that the fittest leaders will appear to match an organization's conditions. The example of the two presidents supports this; they were selected for leadership because their styles and philosophies met the necessities of their institutions' conditions.

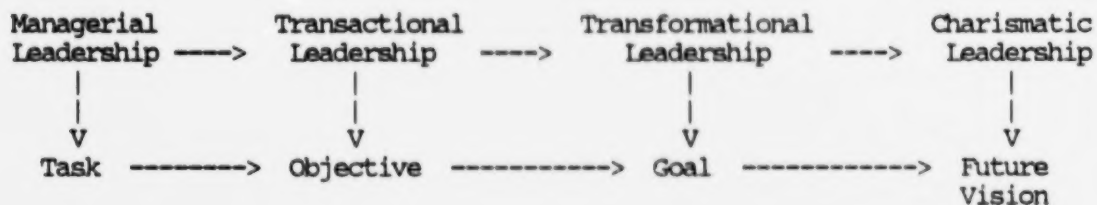
Situational variables are dynamic. A leadership style pertinent to one condition may not be to another. For example, Brown's transactional style dovetailed with the objective of UUS to overcome its financial crisis. Similarly, Jutty's transformational style was suited to the needs of an emerging university. However, the changing conditions of an institution may reduce the effectiveness of the president's leadership style and have a decided effect on reducing the length of the CEO's tenure. The speed with which conditions change may affect tenure more than "burn out" does. But this raises more questions than it answers. If conditions promote the adherence to one leadership style over another, can

leaders change styles to fit the conditions, and if so, can the changes be accepted by "followers?" Can the followers, conditioned to a leader's particular style, accept the change?

Thus, there is a dynamism in the ambiguities of academic presidential leadership. Leadership connotes an understanding of the style appropriate to the conditions and an ability to use that style to influence the behavior of others. Those others can reside within the organization, requiring managerialship. Or those others can reside outside of the organizations requiring the less task-oriented skills of leadership. The ambiguities require the university president to know when to move between being a manager and being a leader.

RELATING LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Elements of leadership theories can be synthesized to create a framework. Leadership that is task-oriented and managerial in nature is inspired from situational and human relations movement theorists. Burns presents forms of leadership that are objective-oriented and goal-oriented. Willner shows leadership that is teleological or vision-oriented. These forms of leadership, while presented from different sources, are not disconnected; in fact, they can be conceptualized on a continuum:



This model suggests that each type of leadership may contain elements of the previous form. There is a hierarchical or building block quality to this framework and an unintentional value-ladenness. What is described is simply that certain types of relationships between people in organizations to accomplish some action may require certain types of leadership processes. As those activities are elevated to higher moral planes, or, at the least, are less definitive, the leadership form that emerges is of a more spiritual or inspirational quality.

Viewing what worked for Brown and Jutty against a background of theory has raised several leadership issues. If their styles worked, can that knowledge be put to use toward a more general theory of leadership or in creating a practical guide for other academic leaders?

It is clear that, in the final analysis, both Brown and Jutty exemplified leadership behavior. Strict dogmatic adherence to management techniques alone may have permitted their institutions to survive; but, in contrast, their respective leadership styles encouraged growth and evolution beyond mere survival.

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